
The SAG RAG is published bi-monthly by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Editors: Jim and Liz Wolff, PO Box 865, McCloud, Ca. 96057. Printing: Ray Miller. Grotto meetings are held the second Friday of the month at 7:30 pm. Meeting places are announced in the newsletter. Dues are due January 1, prorated by quarter, \$6. Subscriptions are \$6/year.

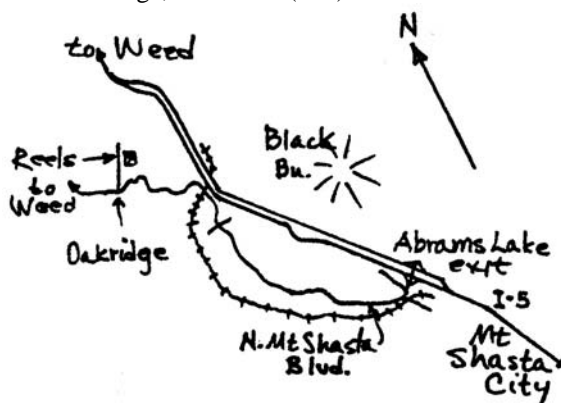
Welcome New Member Jay Swofford! He is the head cave guide at Oregon Caves National Mon. He is an NSS member and wants to be more active in caving in northern Calif. and southern Oregon, so write and/or call Jay at: POB 128, Cave Junction, OR 97523, phone (503) 592-3400.

CAVER'S CALENDAR

November 10 Meeting at Oregon Caves!

Jay Swofford will be hosting the Nov. 10 meeting in the main lodge at Oregon Caves National Monument. We will be staying free for room and board, but it might be good to take cave food and snacks for ridgewalking, as we won't get to do much off trail caving in Oregon Cave itself. Bring caving gear and warm clothing, it's a cold cave. If you can attend, call and make a reservation by Nov. 8, (503) 592-3400. The Caves are reached from Grants Pass and Cave Junction OR, via a winding road.

December Meeting and Christmas Party at Reel's.
7908 Oakridge, Weed CA (503) 938-4078.



Thanksgiving Weekend Nov 23-26th – Cave Research Foundation Lava Beds N.M. Cave Inventory. For more info on how you can join the CRF and help, contact: Janet Sowers, 5844 San Jose Ave., Richmond, CA 9481214, (415) 528-6515.

Minutes of September 8 SAG meeting:

Present: Jim & Bea Kottinger, Ray Miller, Clarence Horner, Wayne Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff, Jay Swofford, Gloria ?

Meeting called to order by vice-chair Jim K, minutes accepted as read, treasurer's report shows a balance of \$249.79

Old Business: The register will be set in 3 Level Ice Cave Sept. 9. The meeting schedule for the Western Regional meet was passed around.

New Business: Jay Swofford turned in his membership form and dues. There is a teenager in Medford (?) who is interested in caving and his mom, and es-NSSer, wants him to learn the right way from other cavers. She's willing to drive on trips.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Changes of Address:

Jake Turin
Box 3117, Campus Station, Socorro, N.M. 87801
ph (505) 835-3562

Minutes of October 13 SAG meeting:

Present: Jay Swofford & Gloria, Jim & Bea Kottinger, Jim & Liz Wolff, George & Dorothy Reel, Neils Smith, Wayne Smith.

Chairman Neils Smith called the meeting to order; minutes accepted as read; treasurer's report: \$255.79. Several letters on the Cal Caver and the Region dues controversy were mentioned. Newsletter exchanges were passed around.

Old Business: NSS Convention: people to lead cave and local attraction trips were asked for.

New Business: Neils volunteered to lead a trip to E. Nevada cave. Meeting places were set for November and December. Election process will begin November with nominations; all SAG NSS members in good standing are eligible.

Meeting adjourned 8:40.

Videos by Neils in 3-Level, Shovel, and Four Balcony Pit Caves were shown; Bob Richardson's Marble Mountains; and "Volcanoscapes II."

Claude and MaryBelle Smith (POB same, new st.)
Igo, CA

Caving Activities of Members and Friends:

Freudian Complex: Aug. 22, Roger Jones and Liz Wolff. Took a tourist trip through the Left passage, and did a bit of survey in the Ant Farm area. Found a couple of entrances in an area that has no known entrances.

Three Level Ice Cave Register Installed: On Sept.9 Neils Smith, Jim Kottinger, & Jim Wolff installed a cave register in heavily used Three Level Ice Cave, the first of two caves to receive such a device. Bat Cave ("Half Mile Cave") will be the next one.

Freudian Complex: Sept. 23, Jim & Liz Wolff and Ray Miller. The first trip for Ray this summer. Tried to relocate the entrances that Roger and Liz had found with no luck. Mapped a portion that had been passed over and partially mapped. Jim "scooped" about 250' – 300' of virgin cave in the "Ant Farm" area – it still goes....

Freudian Complex: Sept. 29, SAG members Jim Kottinger, Wayne Smith, Ray Miller took Jim Smart, a caver from Great Britain, to this cave complex with just touring in mind; for our visitor hadn't seen any lava tubes in the States before. Also Three Level Ice Cave was visited and the register checked on while out that direction – there were no new entries.

Wellhella Cave (Battle Cr. #2): October 2, a six hr. trip was done by Bill McCoy and Jim Wolff from McCloud, and British caver Jim Smart. An addition was made to the bone deposit area, and "a good time was had by all!"

– A new (as-of-yet) unnamed cave found in the Marbles late this year by Derek Hoyle of SFBC, was pushed on Oct. 7th by two mapping parties. Cynthia Ream and Derek netted 700 ft. on a 14 hr. trip – while Steve Knutson, Mark Harder and Jim Wolff mapped 400 ft. on an 8 hr. trip. The cave is still going, and seems to head away from close neighbors, Rainy and Sunbeam caves.

Freudian Complex: Oct. 12, Ray Miller and Liz Wolff braved hunting season to go surveying in the lower end of the Complex. More complexity in what we had thought was fairly straight-forward cave was found. Not many feet were surveyed (ours were tired after the miles hiked to get to the work area). The axiom holds true today: Hunters can't be found at any great distance from a road; we didn't see one all day.

Water Caves: Oct. 14, Jim Wolff and Neils Smith had a look at this little-visited cave complex. On our way to the cave we met a couple that was going into 3-Level Ice Cave and told them about the register. Once at the cave we did at least half of what Bosted et al mapped back in '82 and '83. And this is a small percent of what is known, mapping anyone?

British Caver Visits by Liz Wolff

Jim Smart, a member of the Bristol Exploration Club, visited the Mt. Shasta area in late September. He arrived by bicycle in time for the first heavy rains. He took two local cave trips, for which he promises trip reports when he gets around to writing next. He plans on being in the area for the NSS convention next summer.

Descriptions of all the caves he visited can be found in various 1989 editions of "The Belfry Bulletin," the journal of the Bristol Exploration Club (address: The Belfry, Priddy, WELLS, England). Cavers visiting England will be welcome at his club HQ. Following is his report of Filipino caving and other dangers.

A Brief Look at Caving in the Philippines by Jim Smart, Bristol Exploration Club, U.K.

The Philippines comprise over 7000 islands, though only about 500 of them exceed a square kilometer in area. Limestones are fairly common but due to political instability foreign cavers have tended to limit their investigations to the comparatively safe provinces north of Manila on the island of Luzon. Here, particularly in Mountain Province, more than 300 caves have been recorded, including the Latipan-Lokohong System at Sagada. At -163m this is the Philippines' deepest cave.

Farther north in Cagayan Province the Callao Caves are generally agreed to exceed 9 km in length but no proper map has ever been made of this system, so in the meanwhile, the length record is held by the St. Paul's Underground River on the distant western island of Palawan. In the early 1970's an Australian team surveyed 8200 m of cave here including 7 km of deep water river passage.

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The 1989 Reconnaissance

Bearing in mind that northern Luzon had been fairly well explored and that the southern island of Mindanao is a particular political hotspot, I decided to limit my explorations to the central group of islands known collectively as the Visayas. Research in the libraries of various British caving clubs produced evidence of caves on all the major islands except Negros, the Philippines' seventh largest island.

I traveled by local transport or on foot, lodging with the local people where no commercial accommodation was available. When required guides employed for a modest sum, but generally the friendly people gave freely of their time and knowledge. For many families in cave areas bat-guano mining is a major source of income and the caves are well-known to them. Most of the caves I visited had already been thoroughly explored not only in search of guano, but also in the optimistic quest of treasure reputed to have been left by the Japanese after World War II and also for bats with which many poorer Filipinos supplement their meager diet.

I was only able to complete half my planned itinerary during the ten weeks I spent in the field. The Filipinos easy lifestyle makes all travel slow, especially where a visiting foreigner is concerned: courtesy calls have to be made to local officials and often written security clearance must be obtained.

But the main reason my progress was so slow was that I kept finding caves. More than 100 of them were explored on the islands of Panay, Negros, and Cebu alone. Negros was the biggest surprise. No caves had previously been reported here, but within 12 hours of my arrival I had gathered enough information to keep me on the island for five weeks. The caves were mostly concentrated at the northern and southern ends of Negros' Occidental Province and though most of them were fairly small and uninteresting, I came away with at least two areas worthy of further investigation. First, near the town of Ilog, a resurgence cave was followed upstream to a sump and a dry, high-level series of railroad tunnel sized passages. Using a length of rope as a measure my companion & I concluded that we traversed more than a kilometer of passage here with many leads still to be explored. Second, near New Escalante, a series of shafts estimated to be about 61m deep were not explored due to a lack of equipment. Even the local guano miners have not descended these pits.

Similarly my two excursions on Cebu Island revealed sites worthy of further investigation. Near the town of Toledo, 700m of cave was surveyed by pace and compass to an underground river that continued large and inviting both up and down stream. Lack of time precluded further exploration here. Many entrances in the nearby cliffs were left unexplored as was the high limestone plateau above. And in the highlands a day's walk from Cebu City, lack of equipment prevented my descending into a chamber 30m high at the back of an otherwise easy and short cave profusely decorated. Although not authenticated by proper surveys, my brief visit to the Philippines took me to caves that without doubt, merit a listing in the top ten longest and deepest so far recorded.

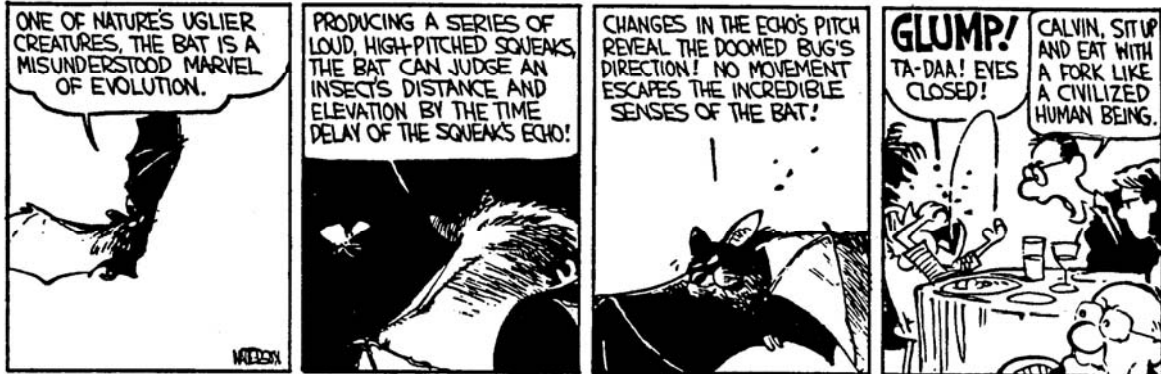
Future Plans

The only specific caving equipment I carried on the 1989 reconnaissance was a variety of light sources. It had been intended to follow up my solo travels with a small expedition should my findings be positive.

The caves are there alright but the provinces are a political tinder-box. The armed forces of the Philippines and the communist New People's Army carry out a desultory shooting war with each other and with bandits, loggers, miners, vigilantes and anybody caught in the crossfire. My camp in Toledo with the Cebu Mountaineering Club was curtailed when miners' vigilantes began taking a greedy interest in our equipment and later, at the annual congress of the National Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines, more than 310 participants were detained by the N.P.A. on the slopes of Mt. Apo. Thousands of dollars worth of equipment was confiscated. Of the 300 detainees, 3 were foreigners (myself included) and were held for a further 10 days before the intervention of the Red Cross, the Roman Catholic Church, and other bodies were able to secure our release.

At the moment the Philippines is not the place for an expedition. Nevertheless I shall be continuing my low-key travels in the Visayas next year. The island of Samar is particularly worthy of some investigation. And members of the Cagayan Mountaineering Club have been equipping themselves with modern caving gear and ropes, and have done some useful work in some of that province's 200 recorded caves. I shall be joining them for a few weeks in January and February 1990 with full rope and surveying equipment.

Calvin and Hobbes



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